

VZCZCXRO5934
OO RUEHDBU RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV RUEHSR
DE RUEHAK #4373/01 2121528
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 311528Z JUL 06
FM AMEMBASSY ANKARA
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 7549
INFO RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHAM/AMEMBASSY AMMAN PRIORITY 0819
RUEHLB/AMEMBASSY BEIRUT PRIORITY 0446
RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0311
RUEHDM/AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS PRIORITY 1533
RUEHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV PRIORITY 0064
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKDAI/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC//J-3/J-5// PRIORITY
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU//TCH// PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHMFISS/HQ USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ANKARA 004373

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR TASK FORCE ONE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/30/2021

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#) [IS](#) [LE](#)

SUBJECT: TFLE01: TURKISH PRESS AND PUBLIC CONDEMN QANA
ATTACKS; WIDESPREAD CRITICISM OF ISRAEL AND U.S

REF: A. ANKARA 4331

[1](#)B. ANKARA 4236

Classified By: Charge Nancy McEldowney for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

[1](#)1. (C) Summary: Continued large-scale attacks causing civilian deaths such as the Qana bombing in Lebanon are fueling increased anti-Israel and anti-American sentiment among the public and the press. Protests in Istanbul and Ankara against the U.S. and Israel occurred on July 28 and 29, and may foreshadow more mainstream reaction. End Summary.

[1](#)2. (U) The Ministry of Foreign Affairs released a statement on July 30 "deploring the demise of more than 50 innocent people. . .in the raids of the Israeli army targeting Qana." Calling Israel's force against Lebanon "disproportionate and indiscriminate," the Turkish government urges an immediate cessation of Israel's attacks on Lebanon, a halt to the rocket attacks in to the Israeli territories and an urgent declaration of a cease-fire.

[1](#)3. (U) Turkish press on July 31, regardless of viewpoint -- mainstream, nationalist, Islamic and leftist -- strongly condemned Israel for the bombing in Qana. Nationalist Bugun headlines, "Israel No Different than Al-Qaeda;" Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak devotes the entire front page to the story and headlines, "Terrorist Israel"; liberal Radikal says, "Is This What You Call Justified Self-Defense?" Mainstream Hurriyet newspaper writes the "world was shocked" by the attack and that Lebanon called it a "war crime" and held the U.S. "responsible for the massacre." Mainstream Sabah headlines "Just Like Bosnia," where the U.S. "remained silent for months" while "8000 Muslims were brutally massacred" before NATO forces took action. On page one, alongside a large photo of dead children being removed from the wreckage in Qana, mainstream Aksam inserts a photo of a smiling Secretary Rice reporting "while bombs rained down on children, Secretary Rice smiles for the media; she said an immediate cease-fire was not necessary."

[1](#)4. (U) Columnists also write about the crisis. Two columnists from opposite sides of the Turkish political spectrum, one from the Islamist Yeni Safak and one from the secularist Radikal, make the same assertion -- that support

for Hizballah is spreading fast, including among Christian Lebanese.

15. (SBU) On July 28 in Istanbul, approximately 1500 members of various Turkish political parties and NGOs gathered in Taksim Square to march in protest against Israel and its targeting of civilians in Lebanon. On July 29 in Ankara, the communist-affiliated Worker's Party led a demonstration of approximately 1200 protesters in front of the Embassy. Chanting slogans such as "Murderer Americans Get Out of the Middle East," the group laid a black wreath at the front gate. Across the wreath in Turkish, the banner read "the U.S. will be buried in this region. The Bush-Rice gang will be buried in this region."

16. (C) Nabi Avci, an adviser to PM Erdogan, mirrored public sentiment in a July 31 meeting with us. In Avci's view, not only does Turkish public opinion equate the U.S. with Israeli actions, but many now believe that Israel would not be acting in such an unrestrained manner, absent U.S. encouragement. Early on in the crisis, some focused on Hizballah's actions; now people - including the more sophisticated in the press - see only Israel as the aggressor. The U.S. should work for an immediate ceasefire. If unrestrained attacks continue for another week or more, the perception will be that Israel attained its goals and finally consented to a ceasefire; not that the U.S. exercised leadership. Corollary is a growing belief among average Turks that the U.S. is tying the hands of the UN. The U.S. can only regain the high ground by stepping back and giving an impression of impartiality, Avci concluded.

Visit Ankara's Classified Web Site at

ANKARA 00004373 002 OF 002

<http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/ankara/>

MCELDOWNEY